

LOVE JOYING IN LOVE

NO. 1943

A SHORT ADDRESS
TO A FEW FRIENDS AT MENTONE, AT THE BREAKING OF BREAD,
ON LORD'S-DAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 9, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*"I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse: I have gathered My myrrh with My spice;
I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk:
eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved."
Song of Solomon 5:1.*

NO sooner does the spouse say, "Let my Beloved come into His garden," than her Lord answers, "I am come into My garden." "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." When we desire our Lord Jesus to come to us, He has already come in a measure; our desire is the result of His coming. He meets us in all our desires, for He waits to be gracious. Our "come" is no sooner uttered than it is lost in His, "Behold, I come quickly!"

When we perceive that the Bridegroom has come, we perceive also that He has done exactly what He was asked to do. How cheering to find that our mind is in harmony with His mind! Our heart says, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." His heart replies, "I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk." "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." The Lord Jesus makes the desires of His saints to be the foreshadowing of His own actions, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." His secret counsel is made known in the believing soul by desires inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Note well that the Bridegroom kindly takes to Himself as His own all that is in the garden. His spouse spoke of "His pleasant fruits," and He acknowledges the least and most homely of them to be His own. He repeats the possessive particle—"My;" "My myrrh, My spice, My honeycomb, My honey, My wine, My milk." He disdains nothing which the garden of His bride produces. He is fond of the notion of joint-heirship, even as in another place He said, "My Father, and your Father, My God, and your God." Let us also value the personal possessive pronouns; the sweetness of the promises lies in them. These are our arms with which we embrace the promises. Beloved brethren in Christ Jesus, is it not charming to see our Lord appropriating us, and all that we are, all that we have, all that grows within us, and all the varied forms of His grace, which are the outcome of His own work within our hearts? Within us certain things are bitter, but wholesome, and He says, "My myrrh." Some things are sweet, though homely, and He says, "My honey." Some things are of a rarer sort, and He says, "My spice," while others are commonplace enough, and He says, "My milk." Our Lord takes no exception to any one of the true growths of the garden, whether it is myrrh or milk, and He asks for nothing more than the garden may be expected to yield; He is content without the butter of cows, or flesh of fed beasts, satisfying Himself with honey fresh from the hive.

I note, with much delight, that matters which seem inconsistent with perfection are not refused by the heavenly Bridegroom. As the Lord did not refuse for an offering the leavened cakes of the first fruits, so in this instance He says, "I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey." The honey would be purer without the comb, but as it is incident thereto, He takes the one with the other. He graciously accepts not only our heart's desire, but the very mode in which our weakness works towards that desire. It is as if He delighted in the words of our prayers as well as in the essence of our prayers, and prized the

notes of our songs as well as the meaning of them. Yes, I believe our Lord puts our tears as well as our sorrows into His bottle, and hears our groans as well as our desires. The honeycomb which contains the honey is precious to Him. After He had risen from the grave, He ate a piece of a honeycomb, and I doubt not that He had a reason for choosing that food; sweet gathered from sweets, yet not without wax. Our Lord accepts our services without nicely noting and critically rejecting the infirmity which goes with them.

I note also that He Himself gathers what He enjoys, “I have gathered My myrrh with My spice.” Many a holy thing, which we have not in detail offered to Him in set form, He knows to have been given in the gross, and so He takes with His own hand what He knows we have by a comprehensive covenant made over to Him. How sweetly does He fill up our blanks, and believe in our consecration, even when we do not repeat the form of it!

Moreover, He makes mixtures out of our fruits, for He gathers myrrh with balsam, and drinks wine with milk, thus taking the rarer with the more common. He knows how to make holy compounds out of the graces of His people, thus increasing their excellence. He is the best judge of what is admirable, and He is the best fashioner and mixer of character, He is using His skill upon us. Often by our mingled experiences He accomplishes an increase of virtue in us. Some graces are the result of work and wisdom, as wine which must be trod from the grapes; others are natural, like milk which flows from living fountains without art of man, but the Lord accepts them both, and so combines them that they are pleasant to Him to a high degree. Simple faith and experimental prudence make up a sacred milk and wine, and the like may be seen in rapturous love and calm patience, which blend most deliciously. The Lord loves us, and makes the most of us. He is pleased with all that is the true produce of His grace, and finds no faults with it, on the contrary, He says, “I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey.”

Having made these observations upon the Lord’s fulfilling the prayer of the spouse; I should like to deliver the following remarks upon the text—

It is evident that *the Lord Jesus is made happy by us*. These poetical sentences must mean that He values the graces and works of His people. He gathers their myrrh and spice because He values them; He eats and drinks the honey and the milk because they are pleasant to Him. It is a wonderful thought that the Lord Jesus Christ has joy of us. We cost Him anguish, even unto death, and now He finds a reward in us. This may seem a small thing to an unloving mind, but it may well ravish the heart which adores the Well-beloved. Can it be true that we afford joy to the Son of God, the Prince Emmanuel? The King has been held in the galleries, He has been charmed by us. Our first repentance made Him call together His friends and His neighbors; the first gleam of faith He ever saw in us made His heart rejoice, and all that He has seen in us ever since of His own image, worked by His grace, has caused Him to see of the travail of His soul. Never has a farmer taken such pleasure in the growth of his choice plants as our Lord has taken in us. “The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him; in those that hope in His mercy.” That is a thought to be rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel. Yes, the Lord’s church is His Hephzibah, for, He says, “My delight is in her.”

The second thought is that *the Lord Jesus will not and cannot be happy by Himself; He will have us share with Him*. Note how the words run—“I have eaten;” “Eat, O friends!” “I have drunk;” “Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.” His union with His people is so close that His joy is in them, that their joy may be full. He cannot be alone in His joy. That verse of our quaint hymn is always true—

*“And this I do find, we two are so joined,
He’ll not be in glory and leave me behind.”*

He will not be happy anywhere without us. He will not eat without our eating, and He will not drink without our drinking. Does He not say this in other words in the Revelation—“If any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and He with me”? The intercommunion is complete; the enjoyment is for both. To make our Lord Jesus happy we must also be happy. How can the Bridegroom rejoice if His bride is sad? How can the Head be content if the members pine? At this table of fellowship His chief concern is that we eat and drink. “Take, eat,” He says, and

again, “Drink you, all of it.” I think I hear Him now say—“I have eaten, and I have drunk, and although I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God; yet eat you, O friends: drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved!” Thus we have seen, first, that Christ is made happy by us, and secondly, that He insists upon our sharing His joy with Him.

If we have already enjoyed happy fellowship with Him, *the Lord Jesus calls upon us to be still happier*. Though we may say that we have eaten, He will again say, “Eat, O friends!” He presses you to renew, repeat, and increase your participation with Him. It is true we have drunk out of the chalice of His love, but He again invites us, saying, “Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved!” Of other wines it would be ill to say, “Drink abundantly,” but of this wine the Lord says, with an emphasis, “Drink abundantly, O beloved!” Oh, for grace to renew all former enjoyments with greater zest, and deeper intensity! It has been sweet even to taste and sip, what must it be to eat and drink abundantly?

Must it not mean that, though we know the Lord Jesus, we should try to know more of Him, yes, to know all that can be known of that love which passes knowledge? Should we not labor, to realize more of HIM, taking in the whole truth concerning His person, and love by meditation, contemplation, understanding and reverent simplicity? Let nothing lie by; let us eat and drink all the stores of the banquet of love.

As the mouth with which we eat is faith, does not the Savior seem to cry, “Believe on Me. Trust Me. Confide in Me abundantly”? Eat and drink with large appetite, by receiving into your heart’s belief all that can be received. Oh, for grace to appropriate a whole Christ, and all the love, the grace, the glory that is laid up in Him!

Does it not also mean—have greater enjoyment of divine things? Partake of them without stint. Do not restrict yourself as though you could go too far in feeding upon the Lord Jesus. Do not be afraid of being too happy in the Lord, or of being too sure of His salvation, or of having too much assurance, or too much devout emotion. Dread not the excitements which come from fellowship with Christ. Do not believe that the love of Jesus can be too powerfully felt in the soul. Permit the full sweep and current of holy joy in the Lord to carry you away; it will be safe to yield to it. “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, Rejoice.”

Beloved, let us now take our fill of Christ. Since we believe, let us believe more unreservedly; if we enjoy, let us enjoy more thoroughly. If we have life, let us have it more abundantly. In this case we may eat, and our soul shall live; we may drink, and not only forget our misery, but drink again, and enter into bliss. Our Lord beckons us from the shore to the sea; He calls us from the lower seat to come up higher. He would have us gladder, stronger, fuller, holier. He presses the provisions of His love upon us, like a host whose joy lies in seeing all his guests feasting. Do not hold back. Be not satisfied with little believing, and scant enjoying, and cool feeling, but let us enter fully into the joy of our Lord!

True, we are unworthy, but He invites us. We shall be wise to yield to His loving pressure. We may not have such another feast just yet, and possibly we may have to go for forty days into the wilderness on the strength of this meal, therefore let us keep the feast heartily. Our Lord, in His invitation, challenges our friendship and our love. He says—“Eat, O friends!” Prove yourselves friends by being free at His table. “Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved!” If this is His way of testing us, let us not be slow in accepting it. Let us show our love by joying in Him as He joys in us. Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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